

# Daily Host Nation Stories for June 16, 2020

## Stuttgart schools gradually opening

Since Monday, all children are allowed to go to school again - but not all at once. Not only the little ones are happy about the personal contact to the teacher and the classmates, the joy is also with the teachers. Some parents are not so enthusiastic.

To make this work, schools have devised different rolling systems depending on the capacity of teachers and rooms. For the first-grader, this meant that on Monday, lessons were held from 7:45 to 10 a.m. Confusion arose, however, because the lessons were not given by the familiar class teacher, but by a subject teacher. And the seven-year-old will probably only see half of her class again by September, because the class was divided because of the distance requirement, reports a father. He has had enough of distance learning and thinks it is "good that specialist staff are taking over the lessons again. One could also offer more lessons," he thinks, because such a short class length means stress for the parents who have to bring and fetch the little ones.

Teachers are worried about a second corona wave. Claudia Neulinger, head of a primary and secondary school, reports that many parents did not want to admit that there were only so few lessons: ten hours per week in primary school. And her colleagues are "happy to be back - and that they have their students back again. They run the show," said Neulinger. Nevertheless, it is "a stressful situation for everyone; the fear of a second corona wave is already noticeable." The staff is also short: because of the final examination on Tuesday, all the other Werkrealschule students were not even called in "because we need the colleagues. (*Stuttgarter Zeitung*, June 16)

## Ukrainian First Lady hospitalized with Covid-19

The wife of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has been hospitalized one week after her corona diagnosis. This was announced by the office of the president. The 42-year-old Olena Zelenska is in isolation, but in a stable condition and does not need artificial respiration. Tests on President Zelenskyy and the couple's two children have so far been negative. (*NTV*, June 16)

### **RKI reports 378 new infections in Germany**

The Robert Koch Institute reports an increase in the number of infections detected by 378 to 186,839, compared to 192 the previous day. The number of Covid-19 deaths increased by nine to 8,800. *(Robert Koch Institute, June 16)*

### **More than eight million coronavirus cases worldwide**

The number of confirmed coronavirus cases worldwide rose to more than eight million for the first time. The focus is particularly on Latin America and the USA. The United States reports the highest number of infections worldwide with about two million, or 25 percent, of all reported cases. However, the infection is growing fastest in Latin America. The region now accounts for 21 percent of all cases. Brazil is becoming the second hotspot after the U.S. with nearly 900,000 officially reported Covid 19 cases and nearly 44,000 deaths. Health experts suspect that the number of unreported cases is likely to be significantly higher in Latin America's largest country due to the lack of broad testing opportunities. *(Redaktionsnetzwerk Deutschland, June 16)*

### **Corona vaccine for Germany and EU will protect for approximately one year**

The corona vaccine of the British pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca, which has been pre-ordered by Germany, France, Italy and the Netherlands millions of times, is intended to protect against infection with the virus for "approximately one year." This is what company boss Pascal Soriot told a Belgian radio station. The vaccination alliance had ordered 300 million doses of the drug for distribution in the EU. Great Britain and the USA have also signed contracts with AstraZeneca. "If all goes well, we will have the results of the clinical trials in August or September," Soriot continued. "At the same time, we are already producing. If all goes well, we can deliver in October." *(NTV, June 16)*

### **Berlin apartment building under quarantine**

A block of flats in Berlin-Neukölln with probably several hundred inhabitants has been quarantined because of 54 corona cases. The exact number of residents is unknown, said health city councilman Falko Liecke on Monday. "I have no idea how many people actually live there," said Liecke, adding that it was not always said who else lived in an apartment, and that "Bild" and "B.Z." had initially reported on this. The Neukölln district office wants to inform about the arrangements on Tuesday (11:30 a.m.).

According to Liecke, residents in the affected apartment block mostly live in larger families. During the visits of the office employees, not all residents were always on

site. The "increased incidence of infection" became known through infections in two school children and the follow-up of the contacts. The quarantine for the residential building was ordered on Saturday. (*Redaktionsnetzwerk Deutschland, June 16*)

### **Official corona warning app available for download**

The official corona warning app of the federal government is available for download. It could be downloaded from Google's App Store shortly after 2 a.m. The app of the federal government is also available in Apple's App Store. The app is intended to enable contact tracing of infected persons and thus shorten the infection chains. (*NTV, June 16*)

### **Concern about corona mutation after outbreak in Beijing**

The story of the second corona outbreak in China is similar to that of the beginning of the corona pandemic. At that time it was the wildlife market in Wuhan, but now the recent outbreak has been observed in Beijing's Xinfadi food wholesale market, the central food supplier for around 20 million people in the Beijing metropolitan area. 40 traces of the virus were found there over the weekend, including on a cutting board used to fillet imported salmon. A few hours later, the major supermarket chains had removed all salmon products from their range.

The news also spread that the new virus was a mutation. Zeng Guang, epidemiologist at the health department, reported in Sunday's "Global Times" that after a preliminary sequencing of the gene strain, the newly discovered virus was different from the type that had previously afflicted the country. But what exactly is a viral mutation? The Hermann-von-Helmholtz-Gemeinschaft Deutscher Forschungszentren e. V. provides a compact, understandable explanation in its corona glossary: "Mutations are changes in the genetic material that occur constantly in every living being and in every cell division. Viruses can also mutate. In a new environment, the virus is often not able to reproduce and spread very well. However, beneficial mutations can accelerate the spread." (*Redaktionsnetzwerk Deutschland, June 16*)

### **Corona-Warn-App reports 20 percent error**

With the new Corona-Warn-App, false alarms may occur in individual cases. "We cannot rule this out 100 percent," said Federal Health Minister Jens Spahn at the presentation of the app for mobile phones, which is available as of today. This would make it possible to inform people for whom there is no real risk. "I would rather have one test too many than too few," said Spahn, adding errors might eventually also occur when infected persons create memory protocols of their contacts for the public health department. According to Jürgen Müller, head of SAP, the company involved

in app development, 80 percent of the contacts registered by the app are estimated correctly. In 20 percent of cases, errors occur; either a risky contact is not recorded, or it is erroneously reported. (NTV, June 16)

## **Non-corona News**

### **Trump confirms plans for partial withdrawal of US soldiers from Germany**

U.S. President Donald Trump has confirmed that he wants to reduce the number of US soldiers in Germany to 25,000. Trump said on Monday at a White House event in explanation of Germany's refusal to increase defense spending in order to achieve the NATO goal it had set itself. Currently, approximately 34,500 U.S. soldiers are stationed in Germany. Trump spoke of 52,000 soldiers. This figure is likely to include approximately 17,000 American civilians in the service of the U.S. armed forces.

Trump accused Germany on Monday of discriminating against the USA in trade. The negotiations with the EU on a trade agreement have not yet been to his satisfaction. With regard to NATO, Trump added that Germany was one of the few member states that had not agreed to meet NATO's self-imposed target for defense spending. "Germany has been in default for years and owes NATO billions of dollars, and they have to pay."

NATO's two percent target calls for all allies to approach the goal of spending at least two percent of their gross domestic product on defense by 2024. Germany has significantly increased its spending in recent years, but in 2019 it was still only at a GDP share of 1.38 percent. Trump, in particular, is therefore continually criticizing the federal government and accusing it of underinvestment. Trump said on Monday that even two percent is actually still too little.

Trump also referred to the economic damage that a partial withdrawal of soldiers from Germany would cause for the relocation of the affected sites. "These are well-paid soldiers. They live in Germany. They spend a lot of their money in Germany." The president added: "Until they (the Germans) pay, we are withdrawing our soldiers, part of our soldiers." (Redaktionsnetzwerk Deutschland, June 15)

### **Trio riots in U1 and threatens passengers - suspect caught**

Three men are said to have rioted on Friday evening in a tram of the U1 line in southern Stuttgart, threatening and throwing things at passengers. One 23-year-old suspect was arrested, the other two managed to escape. The police are looking for witnesses.

According to the officials, the suspects were on a tram of the U1 line in the direction of Vaihingen at 11:30 p.m. In one compartment, the trio allegedly insulted, threatened and threw objects at several passengers, and damaged a door of the train. They then fled from the light rail at the Marienplatz stop. Security personnel were called in to follow the men into a backyard on Jella-Leppmann-Strasse.

There the 23-year-old tried to hit a security employee with a wooden pallet. The employee was unharmed. Security staff discovered him in Adlerstraße and alerted the police. Police arrested the suspect there, while his two accomplices managed to escape. (*Stuttgarter Zeitung*, June 15)

### **Thieves open car and steal valuable goods**

Thieves stole electronic devices and several thousand Euros from a Volvo, Friday night, in Rapunzelweg in Stuttgart-Möhringen. The police are looking for witnesses.

According to officials, the thieves stole a laptop, headphones and cash from a bag. The Volvo is a keyless go vehicle, but according to the owner, it was locked. It is possible that the thieves used electronic devices to trick the keyless system to get inside. Investigations are ongoing. (*Stuttgarter Zeitung*, June 15)